III. CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 - 23 (Cancelled)

24. (New) A method for simultaneously slicing at least two food product blocks (2) fed in parallel to a blade (11), in which

the food product blocks (2) are each inserted into a feed passage (14)

optionally brought into contact with a limit stop (16),

conveyed towards the blade (11) and sliced, and

the ends (17) of the food product blocks (2) remote from the blade are each brought into contact with a means (1, 18),

characterised in that contact between the means (1, 18) and the food product block (2) occurs only during slicing of the respective food product block (2).

25. (New) A method for simultaneously slicing at least two food product blocks (2) fed in parallel to a blade (11), in which

the food product blocks (2) are each inserted into a feed passage (14)

optionally brought into contact with a limit stop (16),

conveyed towards the blade (11) and sliced,

the ends (17) of the food product blocks (2) remote from the blade are

each brought into contact with a means (1, 18) and

the means (1, 18) is driven by at least one conveying means (4), which

also conveys the food product blocks (2),

characterised in that there is only a frictional connection between the means (1, 18) and the conveying means (4), such that the food product blocks (2) are not compressed or are compressed only insignificantly by the means (1, 18).

26. (New) A method for slicing a food product block (2) fed to a blade (11, characterised in that the food product block (2) is conveyed towards the blade (11) by at least one conveying means (4) and in that, at any desired time during slicing of the food product block, the rear end (17) of the food product block (2) is brought into contact in each case with a means (1, 18) and in that the means is driven during said contact with the food product block by the food product block (2) and/or the conveying means (4).

27. (New) A method according to claim 24, characterised in that the front ends (19) of the food product blocks are arranged in such a way that, before the first cut, they are located in a line in a plane substantially parallel to the cutting plane (6) of the blade (11), such that no trimming cut has to be performed.

28. (New) A method of slicing food product blocks, characterised in that a food product block is brought into contact with a means (1) for extending food product blocks (2) during slicing and is extended artificially by the means (1).

29. (New) A method according to claim 24, characterised in that the means (1, 18) is connected to the food product block reversibly and force-lockingly, interlockingly and/or by material bonding.

30. (New) A method according to claim 25, characterised in that connection of the means (1, 18) takes place before or preferably after slicing starts.

31. (New) A method according to claim 24, characterised in that the means (1, 18) is removed from the feed passage after slicing.

32. (New) A method according to claim 24, characterised in that the connection between the means (1, 18) and the food product block (2) is broken once slicing of at least one food product block is completed.

33. (New) A method according to claim 24, characterised in that the means (1) is driven, at least at times, solely by the conveying means (4) of the food product block and/or by the food product block (2).

34. (New) A method according to claim 24, characterised in that, at least towards the end of the respective slicing process, the means (1, 18) is/are in each case engaged with at least one conveying means (4).

35. (New) A method according to claim 24, characterised in that a plurality of food product blocks are sliced in parallel.

36. (New) A device for severing food product slices (12) from at least two food product blocks (2) with a blade (11), in which device the food product blocks (2) may be conveyed towards the blade (11) in each case by at least one conveying means (4) and their rear ends (14) are in contact at least for a time with a means (1, 18), wherein the means (18) is not driven by its own drive during contact with the food product block (2) characterised in that the means are arranged on a central unit (20), which is arranged on the device so as to be displaceable at least at times in parallel with the axis of rotation of the blade (11).

37. (New) A device for severing food product slices (12) from at least two food product blocks (2) with a blade (11), in which device the food product blocks (2) may be conveyed towards the blade (11) in each case by at least one conveying means (4) and their rear ends (14) are in contact at least for a time with a means (1, 18), wherein the means (18) is not driven by its own drive during contact with the food product block (2) characterised in that the means are mounted on a central unit (20) so as in each case to be displaceable at least at times.

38. (New) A device according to claim 36, characterised in that the means (1, 18) comprise a sensor with which their positions relative to the central unit may be determined.

39. (New) A means (1) for extending food product blocks (2) in the axial direction, having an outer circumferential surface (3) which cooperates force-lockingly and/or interlockingly with conveying means (4), which convey the food product blocks (2) within a slicing device (5) towards the cutting plane (6), and a means (7) arranged at the end face which effects a force-locking, interlocking and/or materially bonded connection between the means (1) and the food product block (2), characterised in that the cross-section (8) of the outer circumferential surface (3) may vary in shape and/or size.

40. (New) A means according claim 39, characterised in that it may be driven by the conveying means (4) at least in the conveying direction of the food product block after force-locking, interlocking and/or materially bonded connection with the food product block (2).

41. (New) A means according to claim 39, characterised in that the means (7) is a claw and grip system.

42. (New) A means according to claim 39, characterised in that the means (7) comprises a vacuum between the food product block and the end face (10).

43. (New) A slicing device with a blade (11) which severs food product slices (12) from a food product block (2), which may be conveyed by conveying means in a feed passage in the direction of the blade, characterised in that it comprises a means which conveys a product extender (1) according to claim 39 to the food product block to be sliced and/or removes it from the product passage.

44. (New) A slicing device according to claim 43, characterised in that it comprises a means (13) which picks up the food product extender (1) after removal thereof and brings it up to the end of a further product block.

45. (New) A slicing device according to claim 43, characterised in that it comprises a means with which a force-locking, interlocking and/or materially bonded connection is produced between the food product block and the product extender.

46. (New) A slicing device according to claim 43, characterised in that it is driven by the conveying means at least in the conveying direction of the food product block and after the force-locking, interlocking and/or materially bonded connection.